



NAEP FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the largest continuing and nationally representative assessment of what our nation's students know and can do in subjects such as civics, geography, mathematics, reading, science, U.S. history, technology and engineering literacy, and writing. The results of NAEP are released as The Nation's Report Card. NAEP has been administered as a national assessment since 1969, and Virginia has participated in NAEP state-by-state testing since 1990. Please note, NAEP does not report any results for individual students, schools, or school divisions in Virginia.

For the 2021-2022 school year, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), part of the U.S. Department of Education, will be administering the following operational assessments.

NAEP 2022	State	National	Long-term Trend (LTT)*
Subject:	Reading /Mathematics	Civics/U. S. History	Reading/Mathematics
Sampled Grade(s)	Grades 4 and 8	Grade 8	Age 9
Assessment Window	January 24 to March 4, 2022		January 10 to March 18, 2022

* Long-term Trend (LTT) assessment not administered by computer until 2025. All other assessments will be digitally based.

When will we find out which schools have been selected to participate and the testing date?

Division Superintendents and Division Directors of Testing (DDOTs) were notified on October 31, 2021, if they have schools that are selected to participate in NAEP. The NAEP test windows are predetermined, although some flexibility exists for schools in the assignment of a testing day within the overall test window. A school should respond to the notification promptly if a specific test administration date is necessary.

Is participation in NAEP state testing required?

Yes, the *Code of Virginia* (§22.1-253.13:3.) states: "In order to assess the educational progress of students as individuals and as groups, each local school shall require the administration of appropriate assessments, which ... shall include ... the National Assessment of Educational Progress state-by-state assessment."

Since Virginia's NAEP results are used extensively as confirmatory evidence for any trends identified in the Standards of Learning assessment results, it is important that Virginia's students participate and do their best on NAEP.

While national level NAEP is usually not required under Virginia state law, pilot testing may be required under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 as reauthorized as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and signed into law in December 2015.

How are schools and students selected to participate in NAEP?

Not all schools and students in Virginia or in the nation will be selected to participate in the NAEP assessments. A process called “probability sampling” is used to select a representative sample of Virginia’s, or the nation’s, students to complete NAEP. The probability sampling used for NAEP is based on demographics; schools are listed in order according to factors such as type of location (i.e., rural, suburban), minority enrollment, and achievement on state tests. A sample of schools is selected from this ordered list. This type of sampling allows statisticians to account for clustering effects when they analyze the test results. It also minimizes administration costs. A new sample is drawn every year that is independent from previous year’s sample.

It may seem that samples are not randomly selected, as some schools are selected multiple years in a row. Since the probability of a school’s selection is related to the number of students in the tested grade, larger schools have a higher probability of being selected. Students in a selected school are then identified to participate in NAEP by simple, random sampling. NAEP sampling is constructed by statisticians so that every student in the state or nation has approximately the same chance of being selected.

Who administers NAEP?

The NCES Assessment Division currently has 12 contractors, plus contracts with individual states and other jurisdictions, working to carry out the NAEP Assessments. Eight major contracts currently awarded to four contractors comprise the NAEP Alliance that guides the major aspects of assessment design, item development, data collection, processing, scoring data analysis, and reporting. Other contractors are responsible for one or more aspects of NAEP operations. Information about the current and past contractors may be found at <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/support.aspx>.

Westat is the NCES contractor responsible for conducting NAEP assessments in schools. Information about Westat may be found at www.westat.com.

Who determines what NAEP content areas are tested?

NAEP assessments are administered in many content areas. The current assessment schedule, set by the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB), is planned through the year 2030 and may be found at <https://www.nagb.org/about-naep/assessment-schedule.html>.

The NAGB is an independent, bipartisan board established by the United States Congress that sets NAEP policy and determines when NAEP will be administered and in which content areas.

What are the responsibilities of selected schools?

Schools are responsible for planning testing locations, grouping the students taking the assessment, identifying students who may need accommodations, notifying parents, and getting students to their testing locations at the time of testing. School administrators and teachers are not required to be involved in the actual administration of the assessment; however, school staff

should be available for proctoring each session. All pre-assessment activities will be conducted online by school test coordinators designated by school principals.

Will I be notified if my child is selected to take a NAEP assessment?

NAEP requires that parents of students selected to take NAEP assessments be notified in writing that their child has been or may be selected and that each child's participation is voluntary and the student's information is kept confidential. A sample parent notification letter, that may be adapted to satisfy this requirement, is available. Prior to the assessment, a dated copy of the information given to parents must be provided to NAEP field staff. Schools must maintain a log of any parent refusals.

Student, school, and division confidentiality is mandated by law and all notifications to schools and parents must include the following:

*The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) is authorized to conduct NAEP by the National Assessment of Educational Progress Authorization Act (20 U.S.C. §9622) and to collect students' education records from education agencies or institutions for the purposes of evaluating federally supported education programs under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA, 34 CFR §§ 99.31(a)(3)(iii) and 99.35). All of the information provided by participants may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law (20 U.S.C. §9573 and 6 U.S.C. §151). By law, every NCES employee as well as every NCES agent, such as contractors and NAEP coordinators, has taken an oath and is subject to a jail term of up to 5 years, a fine of \$250,000, or both if he or she willfully discloses ANY identifiable information about participants. Electronic submission of participant's information will be monitored for viruses, malware, and other threats by Federal employees and contractors in accordance with the Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2015. **The collected information will be combined across respondents to produce statistical reports.***

How much time will NAEP require of students selected to take the test?

NAEP long-term trend assessments take about 90 minutes to administer. In addition to the content area sections, NAEP operational assessments and pilot tests include surveys about instructional factors such as instructional practices occurring in the school or other student factors such as how many days of school a student missed in the last month. Students may omit any question.

Are accommodations allowed on NAEP?

Yes, commonly used accommodations may be used on NAEP. For the most part, these are the same accommodations allowed for the Standards of Learning assessments. All students in a school's tested grade or age are eligible for selection in the NAEP sample, and the Virginia Department of Education expects that most students with disabilities and English Learner (EL) students who are selected in the sample will participate in NAEP using NAEP accommodations as appropriate.

Virginia's guidelines for inclusion of students with disabilities and/or English Learners may be found on the NAEP page of the VDOE website.

When and where are NAEP results reported?

NAEP results may be found online at <http://nationsreportcard.gov/>.

Are NAEP results provided at the division level?

Results for NAEP are typically reported only at the national or state level. However, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) provides the opportunity for divisions and consortia of schools to participate in “Below-State NAEP.” Below-State NAEP participants must agree to follow all NAEP standards, procedures, and technical requirements and pay for the costs of all activities associated with the assessment.

In order to be considered for Below-State NAEP participation, each entity must submit a request to NCES by January 15 of the year preceding the NAEP administration. For inquiries on Below-State NAEP, please contact Gina Broxterman, NCES Below-State Coordinator, by email at Gina.Broxterman@ed.gov or by telephone at (202) 502-7822 or Latosha Branch, Virginia NAEP State Coordinator, by email at Latosha.Branch@doe.virginia.gov or by telephone at (804) 225-2102.

What other national or international tests are being conducted this year?

PIRLS – Progress in International Reading Literacy Study

The IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement) is an international cooperative of national research institutions, governmental research agencies, scholars, and analysts working to research, understand, and improve education worldwide. In 2021, IEA’s PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study), well-established as the “de facto” worldwide standard for monitoring reading comprehension achievement, will mark its 20th year. PIRLS 2021 will provide data on trends in comparative reading achievement across countries over two decades. Since 2001, PIRLS has been conducted every five years at the fourth grade. Field tests for PIRLS 2021 will be administered in the United States by NCES during the 2021-2022 school year.

PISA—Program for International Student Assessment

The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) is an international assessment that measures 15-year-old students' reading, mathematics, and science literacy every three years. First conducted in 2000, the major domain of study rotates between reading, mathematics, and science in each cycle. PISA also includes measures of general or cross-curricular competencies, such as collaborative problem solving. By design, PISA emphasizes functional skills that students have acquired as they near the end of compulsory schooling. PISA is coordinated by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), an intergovernmental organization of industrialized countries, and is conducted in the United States by NCES. Data collection for the most recent assessment was completed in Fall 2018.

Confidentiality notice for international assessments:

The National Center for Education Statistics is authorized to conduct this study under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA 2002, 20 U.S.C. §9543). All of the information provided by school staff, students, and parents may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other

purpose except as required by law (20 U.S.C. §9573 and 6 U.S.C. §151). Individuals are never identified in any reports. All reported statistics refer to the U.S. as a whole or to national subgroups.

Why does the United States participate in international assessments?

The United States participates in international studies primarily for two reasons:

- To learn about the performance of U.S. students and adults in comparison to their peers in other countries.
- To learn about the educational and work experiences of students and adults in other countries.

Student assessments are a common feature of school systems that are concerned about accountability and assuring students' progress throughout their educational careers. National or state assessments enable us to know how well students are doing in a variety of subjects and at different ages and grade levels compared to other students nationally or within their own state. International assessments, on the other hand, offer a unique opportunity to benchmark our students' performance to the performance of students in other countries. Similarly, international assessments of adult literacy enable us to compare U.S. adults with their international peers on literacy skills that support productive lives in the workplace and society.

International assessments of students also enable countries to learn from each other about the variety of approaches to schooling and to identify promising practices and policies to consider in their schools. International assessments of adults enable research on the correlates between adults' work and educational experiences and their skill levels within countries and cross-nationally.

NAEP and International Studies Contact Information
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